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**General Assembly**
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Agenda item 5
**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

**Security Council**
**Fifty-sixth year**

## Identical letters dated 5 April 2001 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to draw your attention to the dangerously escalating conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the position of the Committee in that regard.

The Committee is extremely disturbed by the continuing violence and bloodshed on the ground. The reliance of the Israel Defence Forces on excessive military power, including artillery, tanks, helicopter gunships and missile boats, in recent days in particular, has resulted in many deaths and injuries. The loss of life, especially that of children, is always tragic, transcending national and religious lines. The death toll of the last six months has now exceeded 460, mostly among Palestinians. This is an unequal confrontation, with a high human cost, especially for the Palestinian people. Confined to their towns and villages because of the Israeli blockade, the Palestinians are subjected on a daily basis to gunfire, bombardments, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, as well as the destruction of property and infrastructure.

Compounding the desperate straits of the Palestinian people are the disastrous state of the economy, the dispossessing effects of the Israeli settlement expansion and repeated closures of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. As these policies of the Israeli occupation continue, the Committee reiterates the need for the Government of Israel to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. Continued failure on the part of Israel to live up to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention will bring even greater suffering and dispossession to the Palestinian people and will lead to an increased volatility in the entire region.

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The current crisis should not be allowed to persist. Accumulating frustration and anger will only fuel the flames of violence and empower the most extreme elements on both sides, taking the parties farther away from the ultimate goal of achieving peace. The Committee is of the view that, in the circumstances, the parties may need outside assistance in order to break out of the vicious circle of violence. A more assertive approach may be considered — one that would benefit both sides and help restore calm. The international community should take prompt, concrete and resolute steps with a view to preventing any further exacerbation of the situation and bringing the parties back to the negotiating table.

We firmly believe that the international community has a moral responsibility towards the Palestinian people, which has been striving to exercise its inalienable rights for so long. In this context, the Committee reiterates its long-held view that the United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility towards all the aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and norms of international law, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

Our Committee appreciates and strongly supports the important facilitating role played by the Secretary-General in the peace process. We have urged the Secretary-General to continue to remain actively and closely engaged with the parties, directly as well as through the United Nations Special Coordinator, in an effort to end the violence and resume the historic dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. Also, in the light of the recent discussions in the Security Council, we believe that steps could be taken by the United Nations to ensure protection of Palestinian civilians, including through the setting up of a protection mechanism in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ibra Deguène **Ka**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People